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Roger Williams University School of Law

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Newsroom

'A Civil Action' Attorney, Pioneering Jurist To Be Honored at Commencement

Famed plaintiff's lawyer Jan R. Schlichtmann and First Circuit Judge O. Rogeriee Thompson will receive honorary degrees at RWU Law's Commencement ceremonies on May 21.

BRISTOL, R.I., May 3, 2010 – Roger Williams University School of Law will welcome famed plaintiff's lawyer **Jan R. Schlichtmann**, protagonist of the acclaimed book and motion picture, "A Civil Action," as keynote speaker and honorary law degree recipient at its Commencement ceremony on Friday, May 21, 2010.

The law school will also award an honorary degree to the **Honorable O. Rogeriee Thompson**, Circuit Judge for the First Circuit Court of Appeals. Judge Thompson is the first African-American and the second female judge to serve on that court.

Attorney Schlichtmann will address the graduates at the School of Law's ceremony on **Friday, May 21, at 1 p.m.**



A graduate of the University of Massachusetts at Amherst and Cornell Law School, **Jan R. Schlichtmann** is one of the country's most notable plaintiff's attorneys, specializing in the area of complex civil litigation, including consumer, environmental, product, toxic, and mass tort litigation, and earning recognition for obtaining some of the highest verdicts and settlements in civil torts in Massachusetts.

In 1986, Mr. Schlichtmann received national recognition for his representation of eight Woburn, Mass., families against W.R. Grace and Beatrice Foods for the contamination of the Woburn City water supply. The case was widely covered by national media outlets, including "60 Minutes" and "Nova," as well as by articles in legal and scientific journals and books. Mr. Schlichtmann's career and involvement in the Woburn case was chronicled in the 1996 national bestseller, "**A Civil Action**" by Jonathan Harr. In 1997, the book was turned into a major motion picture starring John Travolta as Mr. Schlichtmann.



The **Honorable O. Rogeriee Thompson** currently serves as a Circuit Judge for the First Circuit Court of Appeals. Previously, she was an Associate Justice for the Rhode Island Superior Court, a position she held from 1997 to April, 2010. Before that, she was an Associate Judge with the Rhode Island District Court for nine years.

Over the course of her 34-year law career, Justice Thompson has been a senior partner with Thompson & Thompson; an assistant city solicitor for the City of Providence; an associate with McKinnon and Fortunato; and a senior staff attorney for Rhode Island Legal Services, Inc. An author and consultant, she serves on several committees and boards. Thompson earned her undergraduate degree at Brown University and her J.D. from Boston University School of Law.

For additional information on the 2010 Commencement ceremonies or the honorary degree recipients, contact Michael M. Bowden of University Communications at (401) 254-3881. **The event is closed to the public, but members of the media are welcome to attend with advance reservations only.**